

Message Text

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13-12

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 INT-05 /088 W

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R 140713Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4233

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 23973

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION BANGKOK 13 NOV 75 IS REPEATED FOR YOURACTION

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SONGKHLA 204

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EINV PINS TH MY US

SUBJECT: FUTURE BLEAK ON FOREIGN TIN MINING IN PHANG NGA

REF: SONGKHLA 186

1. TRIP TO WEST COAST PROVINCES NOVEMBER 10-12 REVEALS ILLEGAL MINERS STRENGTHENED CONTROL OF TIN MINING IN PHANG NGA PROVINCE. PROSPECTS EXTREMELY POOR THAT "SON OF TEMCO" AND SIMILAR FOREIGN CONCESSIONS WILL FUNCTION EFFICIENTLY IN AREA IN FUTURE.

2. LOCAL OFFICIALS REPORT ILLEGAL MINERS UNDER GANGSTER SUA KHIN (SONGKHLA 200) WELL ENSCONCED IN TAKUA PA ON CONCESSION LANN OF UK FIRM (SOUTHERN KINTA) WHICH LIES DIRECTLY NORTH OF OLD TEMCO CONCESSION IN PHANG NGA. THAI OFFICIALS CLAIM THAT WHILE RTG HAS A GOVERNOR IN PROVINCE CAPITAL OF PHANG NGA, SUA KHIN IS ACTUAL GOVERNOR IN TAKUA PA--PROVINCE'S LARGEST TTWN.

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3. 3-4 SYNDICATES CONTROLLING ILLEGAL MINERS HAVE INVESTED SIZEABLE SUMS IN BOATS, COMPRESSORS AND DIVING GEAR, AND THIS INVESTMENT GOES ON. ALL BOAT YARDS OF WEST COAST PROVINCES ARE FILLED WITH ORDERS, AND HIGHWAY ALONG COAST SEES REGULAR TRAILER TRAFFIC DELIVERING NEWLY-FINISHED BOATS TO MINING AREAS. TIN SMUGGLING CHANNEL TO PENANG IS WORKING SMOOTHLY, WITH NO RTG ATTEMPTS AT BLOCKING IT. WORKERS POURING INTO PHANG NGA PROVINCE FROM NEIGHBORING AREAS--AS WELL AS FROM NORTHEAST THAILAND--TO TAKE LUCRATIVE IF DANGEROUS DIVING JOBS. MINING OFFICIALS SPECULATE IT ONLY MATTER OF TIME BEFORE SYNDICATES INVEST EMEN MORE MONEY IN BUILDING LARGER BOATS WHICH THE ABLE CHALLENGE FOREIGN FIRMS MINING IN DEEPER WATERS.

4. UK AND AUSTRALIAN FIRMS, WHICH HAVE BEEN HOLDING BACK INVESTMENT FOR OVER ONE YEAR, SEE SITUATION ON GROUND AS BLEAK, ANARCHIC AND LIKELY REMAIN SO. SEVERAL MARGINAL MINES ALREADY CLOSING DOWN RATHER THA PUT UP WITH HARASSMENT. ALTHOUGH NEW GOVERNOR, CHAOWAT SUTLAPA, IS AN IMPROVEMENT OVER DR. TAWAT, POWER OF SYNDICATES NOW SUCH THAT HE UNABLE CONTROL SITUATION. AT SMEE TIME, GOVERNOR MUST CONTINUE MOUTHING NATIONALISM ABOUT THAILAND'S RESOURCES AND HORRIBLE EXPLOITATION BY FOREIGN FIRMS.

COMMENT: IT BECOMING MORE APPARENT NOW THAT NATIONALISM WAS MERE RUSE FOR ILLEGAL MINERS TO MANIPULATE EX-GOV. TAWAT AND CONSERVATION GROUPS. IRONY IS THAT WHILE THAI ILLEGAL MINERS HAVE REPLACED FOREIGN COMPANIES IN MANY AREAS, TIN OUTFLOW TO MALAYSIA IS COSTING RTG ROYALTY MONEY AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE. WHILE NUMBER OF ILLEGAL MINERS HAS INCREASED, THEIR SALARIES SUBSTANTIALLY SMALLER THAN THOSE PAID BY FOREIGN COMPANIES--WHICH NOW LAYING OFF SIZABLE NUMBERS OF LONGTIME WORKERS. BIGGEST WINNERS ARE SYNDICATE MERCHANTS AND GANGSTER LEADERS, WHO MUST BE HAVING LARGE LAUGH AT ALL MAJOR ACTORS IN THE DISPUTE.

I SEE NO REASON WHY MORASS IN AREA SHOULD NOT CONTINUE. SIMILAR WILD WEST SITUATION IN NAKHORN SI THAMMARAT PROVINCE HAS EXISTED FOR OVER DECADE CONCERNING RICH TUNGSTEN DEPOSITS (REPORTEDLY THAILAND HAS SECOND LARGEST TUNGSTEN
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RESERVES OUTSIDE OF COMMUNIST BLOCK). NAKHORN'S TUNGSTEN IS LIKEWISE MINED PRIMITIVELY, WITH CLAIM-JUMPING AND A GRENADE ROLLED INTO SOMEONE'S TENT FAIRLY COMMON PRACTICES. RTG HAS NEVER STEPPED INTO THAT MESS WHILE RESOURCES ARE DEPLETED, AND UNLIKELY IT WILL DARE INTERVENE LOCALLY IN PHANG NGA TIN SHOOT-UP.
CASTRODALE
UNQUOTE WHITEHOUSE

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